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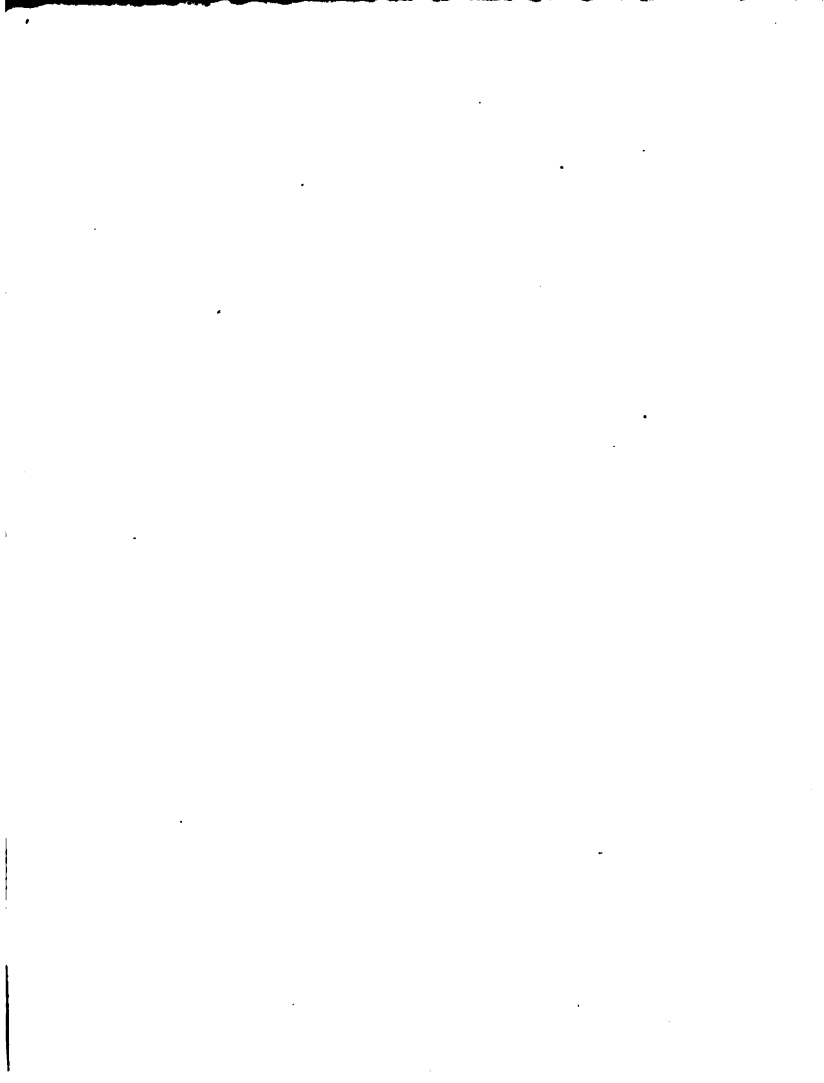
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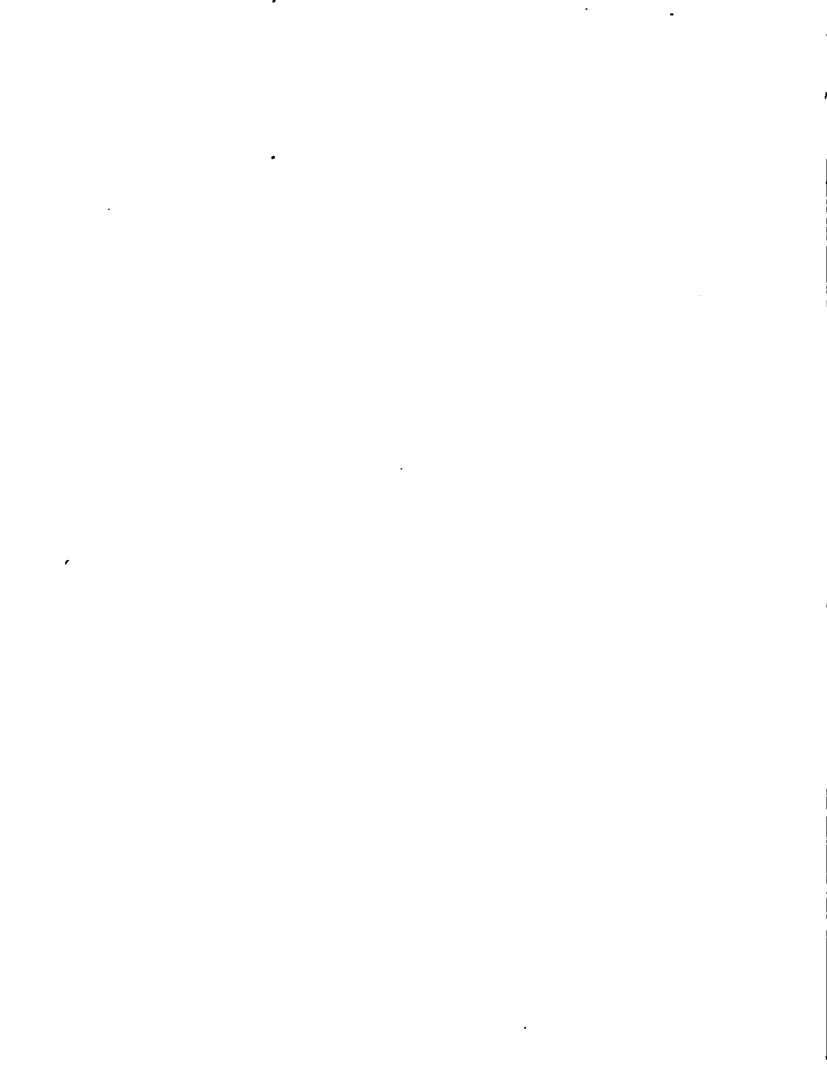
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IDYLLS OF ARCADIA.



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IDYLLS OF ARCADIA:

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

BY

JOHN FREEMAN.

LONDON :

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & CO., LTD.,
1901.

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Dedication.

To her who hath long held my truest soul
A captive to those subtle charms
Which she doth sweet display in every mood ;
And hath full oft my poor heart set
Aheat, and my dull pulse with passion stirred
By the rare beauty of her ways—
I proffer this, my modest tale in song,
The sum of long spent happy toil.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

CANTO I.

Introduction.

The throbbing day in eve's soft bosom hush'd,
Came peaceful night; the stars shone forth
With modest radiance o'er field and mead,
And lane that wound by hill and dale;
Then Boreas blew in gusts of fitful ire,
With weird shriek through twiggéd elm
And antlered oak—else all was drear and still.
Heedless of fleeting time or roaring wind,
'Mid the night's starlit gloom and calm,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Strayed by the banked and hedged ways
A maiden fair, of stature slight,
Yet in whose every movement was displayed
A dignity and courtly grace.
And by her side, a friend of sterner mould,
Who, passing happiest days of youth,
At length to man's estate had full attained ;
For though his step was light, alert,
His laughter full of heart and joyous, gay,
And his whole manner seemed to be
Rather of ripening youth than that of man.
Yet did his ambrosial beard,
And rich auburn hair that loosely fell
In waved tresses o'er his neck,
And the lines that frequent marked and seared
His bold and heightened brow, tell well
That time of life was now attained, when age,
Experience and toil had laid
A staying hand upon the spirit free,
And withered up the bounteous springs

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

That bubble o'er in days of youth, when care
Is not, and pleasure rules the roast.

Love's Interrogation.

The hours of autumn's eve wore slowly on :
Each to the other now had told
Such joys and sorrows as the past had known,
And of the present pleasures sweet
They had discoursed in happy, careless vein ;
Then tenderly, like lovers true,
Each touched on things of soul, of subtler kind,
Till heart and pulse, stirred by passion's flame,
Urged life's blood faster through their veins.
Came silence then, pensive, almost sad,
For now each breast held hidden deep within,
Some secret sweet, yet prone to pain.
Thoughts came and went 'mid the wind's song,
As they strode onward, musing the while ;
Till of a sudden, she of fair mien,
Peering through eve's sweet starry light,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Upward her face turned, and thus spoke :
"Dearest! what ails thine heart and ailing makes
Thee sigh, so that thy manly frame—
Like some stubborn sapling 'fore the blast
Not yielding, shivers ere it bends—
Is shaken by the heavy sob that 'scapes
E'er and again from deep within!"
No word he ventured, but a fresh plaint
Cast on the air. So said she then :
"Sweet is mine office, for I thee hold
Bounden to list when I may chide,
And no less bounden in my ear to tell
Such trials and woes as to thy lot may fall
In daily conflict with the wiles of Fate—
E'en as thou wouldst me freely tell
Of thine achievements glorious and great—
That I may give thee, of my heart,
Balm to assuage such griefs as vex thy soul."

The Soul Perturbed.

Paced they still on, yet he was dumb,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

But his breast heaved, and in great gasps
Came his breath quick and fast, his frame
Knit strong and rigid, like a ripened oak,
Trembled and shook, his step now fell
Uncertain in its measure to the ground—
Thus plain the token that his soul
Was irked by tempest raging fierce within.
Now came they by a rustic stile,
That, quaintly fashioned of two bended arms
From some monarch of the wood near by,
Spread out on either side, so left a gap,
Through which a filly bold might pass
From out the pasture rich, and roam at will
The world that lay beyond, unknown.

The Question.

There stood he now, and, silent still,
He put her gently from him, and exclaimed :
“ Amanda, who to my soul hast brought

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

A Heavenly grace, a blessing sweet, that was
To me a thing before unknown ;
Who hast thy love entwined around my heart,
And so assuaged its ceaseless pain ;
Couldst thou me love, and stand thee pledged to
be
My heart's desire till death may come,
If thou didst know me—Ah! not as now,
Thy lover, who content would be
To give my life when rose the sun at morn,
Could I but this one night enjoy
Thy sweet embrace, and feel thy kisses rich
Upon my cheek, that even yet
Has never known the blush that love awakes—
Not knowing this of me, but as
In time ago, I may, alas! have been ;
Couldst thou me love, again I ask,
If this were so, and mine a past of shame? ”

Love's Response.

She, thus addressed, raised her fair face,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Till the rich light of the now aureate moon,
That, beaming bright in Orient sky,
'Lumined her features, and to him showed
How in his eyes, hers, sparkling, sought
Some sign to make his meaning to her clear.
So gazed she long, and a slight smile
Played o'er her mouth—wrought fine in bowlike
curve—

That, by the pity which it told,
Smote him, and bled his throbbing heart with
pain.

Then she exclaimed, in accents low,
With bosom heaving, and with eyes aflame:
"Thou dost to me a problem put
That might well puzzle sharper wit than mine;
How should I say what answer best
Is due to this strange 'quest to me of thine?
Full well thou knowest, Lucius, I owe
To thee my life, and many pleasures rare,
That my poor heart cannot be dull,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Nor that I can forget thy noble act,
Which from the soft but dread embrace
Of the great river that flows West to East,
Me rescued, and so gave again
A life near lost ; which hence must be
In the sweet future some part thine—
Alas ! than this no more can I thee tell."

Meditation.

He, reading from her soul-lit eyes
A message sweeter than she told in words,
Took heart, and gazing out afar,
As though to find in the dim distant view
Some aid to gather up anew
The straying threads of an eventful life :
Gave forth a doleful sigh, then spoke
In tones uneven, low, as if in mem'ry lost :
" Life is a boundless sea, unknown,
On which we mortals each are cast alone,
Without a helm to guide, or sail

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

To weather storm or calm ; to sink or swim.
Once plunged therein, each mortal must
Do battle with the strong opposing tides ;
And he who in the contest fails,
Will in the maelstrom find a certain end ;
But he who doth the victor prove,
Fate takes in hand, and shows the way anew."

Life's Retrospect.

In pain he sighed anew, and out
Into the misty distance gazing still,
Began afresh, this time to tell,
In broken phrase, what like his life had been :
" In the long past, when youth was mine,
When all things wore an aspect bright and gay,
And each day brought its round of joys,
So that the future caused me not a pang,
I, like a wildling colt, broke loose,
Embarked upon the world's most vain delights—
No hand to stay my course there came,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

And on the path of pleasure sped I fast.
By father's gift and toil inert,
Some portion small of golden coin had I,
Hence soon around flocked friends galore—
Or would I call them, as I know them now,
Mere harpies preying on my store?
Yet one or two have steadfast, true remained—
These took me by the hand and led
The way, with fine Hedonic scorn along
The broader road, that, tortuous, runs,
First level, smooth, and by enticing ways
'Long valleys sweetly fair, then falls
By fast decline and rugged, thorny track,
Through mighty depths, 'mid deep'ning gloom,
Whence taunting shrieks and mocking yells ring
out,
Then, ere the wanderer dreams his fate,
He stumbles, heavy falls and fast descends
The dread abyss of shameful death.
But I digress ; yet have I thee to tell

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

How, when I faced the world alone,
I fared in battle with the Fates and all
Their host that on me fiercely fell.
Each day did I my wits in vain apply
To gain some knowledge of the law,
Its statutes and its wiles and devious ways—
I liked it not, was ever glad
When sunset brought the hateful task to end.
Night saw me setting out to join
Some merry party at a joyous feast,
Thence to the hall to Thespian art
Held dear ; or Terpsichore's gay abode,
Where damsels, clad in raiment bright,
Of texture fine, and not too ample kind,
Their revels held ; by dulcet strain
And graceful pose, with winning smile assumed,
Awoke the rapturous sense of youth.
Anon the gallants and their ladies fair
In aspect, if not chaste in soul,
Within my modest lodgings spent the eve :

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Then flowing wine, the chance of dice,
The thrust and parried wit, the jovial song,
Sweet music of the flute and viol,
The graceful step, sped fast the darksome night,
And brought the purple flush of morn."

Philosophy's Disguise.

" But of a sudden there rang out a note
Discordant, in my daily life :
By spirit of unrest my soul was torn,
And o'er me came a great desire
To play some active part, to gain a share
Of honour, in the ranks of those
Who loudly do profess a means to right
The fancied wrongs of mortal man.
Hence the life of pleasure that till then
Had charmed, I set aside and made
Of doctrines philosophic, things obscure,
Close study, till in my mind I saw
With vain delight, myself a perfect god,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Endowed with means and power to cure
The world of all its ills; to stay the flood
Of lamentation; still the cries
Of woe, that Heavenward rise in volume
Day by day; avert the dread remorse
That loads the hearts of many, turns them sad;
To make life blissful, sweet indeed,
This was my mission—as I vainly thought—
And to its end I set my way.
By speech and pen I sought to prove
The hurtful nature of the bond
That power Divine and Civil law impose
Upon the man and woman who,
Each having found in each some latent charm
That draws them closer, and awakes
A sympathetic chord within their breasts,
Do seek to join their lives in one.
Proclaimed I loud the power of human love
As all sufficient them to hold
In unity, as man and wife, who scorned

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

The need of Church's holy rite,
Or State's decree, to make the tie secure.
Then, too, I claimed that such a bond
Of freewill made 'tween hearts by love enthralled,
Ought, if such love should wither, fade,
And each heart seek the freedom hence enjoyed,
Be put atwain for liberty.
A glorious dream, 'tis true. But then, alas!
Conceivéd of the impulse wild
Of youthful time ; in utter ignorance
Of Nature's laws, Divinely made,
That e'en, though complex and involved,
Are yet in constant harmony.
Soon found I kindred spirits who were bent
Upon the same sad, foolish task
Of trying to divert, by petty schemes,
The even course the world pursues.
Not men alone were these, of selfish mind,
But women fair, reared amid
The happy virtues of an English home,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Who, deaf to friends' entreaties,
Turned aside and went abroad to preach
The cult of love and freedom,
And gloried in their readiness—oh, shame!
To yield their flesh to lustful men."

The Fall.

" Among these Sibyls—each of whom some charm
Seductive to the mind of man
In varying measure naively displayed—
Was one of stature, stately, tall,
With features clearly cut as marble wrought
By chisel of some master hand,
And, too, like marble, soul-less, cold ; yet who
Most strangely did entrance my heart,
My pulse did fire, my passions warmed, till soon
I found her smile held me her slave,
The creature of her uttermost desires.
We were betrothed, not wed, and did
Our friends assure that we were full content

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

To live together, just by love
Alone conjoined, without a priest-drawn pledge,
Or binding vow at altar giv'n.
Alas! that human love lives not so long
As poets fancy, or the world
Desires. Too soon—Ah! all too soon I found
The unblest union thus achieved
Had pains and troubles many, pleasures few,
For nought there was us to compel
To mutual help, to make the best of worst,
To traverse life's way hand in hand.
That love which each must bear to each to bless
The state that we profess'd to fill,
Diminished as the days wore on, and soon
The hateful spirit of distrust
Grew up, and bred dissent and quarrels oft,
Till life became a heavy care ;
Not lightened by the baneful thought that rose
So often—stalking in a hideous form—
That ours was but the shameful life in which

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

The outcasts of the world exist.

Then did the error of my creed come home,

My fall from that high place which men

Must hold, to gain the world's esteem, I saw,

And felt the lash of public scorn.

Why need I tell thee now of all the shame

And misery of that unhappy time?

So let it suffice thou shouldst know that she

Who thus had joined her life with mine—

Perhaps o'erwhelmed with shame, but stayed by
pride

From seeking me to right the wrong—

And that would I have gladly done, God knows—

Went from our home one darksome night,

Near nine years gone, without a word or sign,

And with no burden but the child

That to us had been born—whose infant wiles

Had to my heart her sweet endeared—

And though for them I searched both far and
wide,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

I never since have heard nor seen."
He stayed a moment, sighed, then did conclude :
"Such is my life, a sad, unhappy tale
Of wasted effort and of idle thought.
Now, knowing all, I ask thee yet again,
Canst thou but love me, give my heart the care
Of thy dear self till death may come?"
Time had crept on apace, the Queen of night,
Full half her course had now attained,
And from her zenith beamed majestic o'er
The peaceful earth that lay beneath ;
Piercing the tree-shade gloom with argent points,
That, on sable shafts, like arrows
Sped 'tween the wind rocked twigs and branches
bare,
And struck the crust of Mother Earth.

Love's Sympathy.

Unto him, he who had his love declared,
The maiden drew ; she, yielding, laid

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Her hand in his, then raised her wondrous eyes
To meet his questioning gaze.
Some moments thus she silent stood ; her lips
Expressed a smile that told of hope
And love, of sorrow and a bosom's pain.
Now pulsed her form, the tender smile
Died off her rosy lips, which, quivering then
Like harpstring struck by loving hand,
Stirred by some strong impulse of soul, thus
voiced,
In trembling accents, her reply :
" Thy tale, O Lucius, doth sound strange indeed ;
It gives me pain, and to the full
Awakes the tend'rest sorrow of my heart
T'ward thee ; for it is plain that thou
Hast, for the errors made, paid well the due
Exacted from all those that err
Against th' unwritten laws Divine, while life
Doth reign within our bodies frail,
Nor waits until the soul hath left the clay.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Yet know I not how I may give
That pledge thou ask of me—which doth in truth
Strike strangely sweet in accord with
My heart's most keen desire—for it doth seem
The time for this is not yet fit."
Her peace she held, and turned her gaze
Out o'er the moonlit hill and vale.

Love's Bidding.

"The time not fit!" he quick exclaimed—"And
why?
That which I ask my heart doth prompt,
For it hath long been full of love for thee;
And though I know, alas! too well,
The past hath found me wrong, my ways astray,
This will I soon repair if thou
Wilt only be my loving help and guide."
Impassioned, pleading thus, he drew
Her closer to him, and an answer sought
By eager searching in her eyes,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

That to his now had turned, by charm, again.
She sadly smiled, and gently moved
Her head that on his shoulder rested now,
Then spoke again in dulcet tones :
“ Glad would I give thee as my answer, yea ;
Fain would I unto thee resign
Both flesh and spirit, without thought or fear ;
Yet doth it seem to me, though time
Hath passed and gone, thou art in duty bound
Again to seek her of whom thou
Didst me tell but now, and the child that she
In utter travail bore to thee :
For as a man, of sterner sense than she,
Thou didst her lead to shame ;
And though nor State nor Church may hold thee
 bound,
Yet Heav’n cannot forget thy vow ;
So of thine honour it is surely due
That nought of effort should remain
Undone, to search her out, her pardon gain,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

And make her fitting recompense."

The Submission.

Amazed, with eyes astare, he stood aside
A step, and, silent, gazed awhile
In wonder at the face of her he loved,
O'er which a smile angelic played
Anew. "And this," he said in solemn voice
And slow—"And this is what thou thinkest
I should do; is what thy heart doth wish before
It can in accord beat with mine?"
She slightly bowed her shapely head, and thus
Expressed to him a silent aye.
He groaned, stepped out a pace or two, then quick
Strode back again, her close beside,
And, while dolorous smile his face arrayed,
Spoke out in pain and sadness thus:
"That she who spurned me, and her way went
forth
Alone by night, as I have told,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Who robbed me of the one pure lustrous soul
The world then had whom I could love ;
That she who thus me used, the object of
My pride, my bosom's gain can be,
Is not, alas! a likely happening ;
Though when the wound within my heart
Was fresh, I did far seek the wand'ring pair
To find ; and gladly would have pledged
That happiness of life which should mine be,
To hold them both mine own alway ;
Yet now, when time hath healed the wound, and
change
Come o'er us all, the wish by thee
Avowed is not most easy to fulfil.
But as thy wisdom sweet doth seem
To judge this is a duty that I owe
To Heaven, and to them and thee,
I will go hence the world afresh to roam."
Again he paused, with thoughtful mien
Looked out afar, then of a sudden said :

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

“ But what of thee, if I the twain
Should find? What of the bond that hath close
held

Our hearts as one, our lives made sweet
And strong—which now may be destroyed for
aye?

Must I thee lose, and the blessings
Rich, that, by the light of thy pure soul
In mercy Heav’n hath showered on me?”

The Treth.

By the dimmed light that now the moon effused
Through the fleecy cloak that sped in
Wavy form before the wind, and coyly
Hid her brilliance as she lapsed
Gently down to meet the breaking morn;
Saw he the sorrowing smile which
Hovered o’er the maiden’s lips, her drooping
Eyes, that well nigh were awEEP with
Conscious pain; and knew he not how best to
judge

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

The passion that her ruled within.
In a brief space she spoke again and said :
" Thus have I tried thee that my heart
May know the quality of thy regard ;
And hast thou stood the test full well,
Proving sincere thy love, thy manhood pure,
E'en though thy youth were spent in wrong.
Fear not, my love will always steadfast be,
My heart remain for ever thine,
However Fate may rule 'twixt thee and me ;
Yet can I not surrender free
All that is mine to give to thee, until
This duteous quest of thine be done.
So let it be that hence a year and day
We meet again at this same place,
And at the hour when the last regal glow
Of the day's king doth melt into
The rising glory of the night's fair queen.
Till then, O Lucius, fain must we
Be linked by our two souls alone. Meanwhile

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

That bond of love which hath till now
Us held in close affinity, in main must be
Our source of strength ; a mutual trust
Must we endure but o'er this period brief,
Whilst absent and apart ; each day
A prayer that Heaven will truly guide
Thy footsteps and my own to tread
The path that may the rightmost goal attain."

Parting's Sweet Sorrow.

Again he took her hand in his,
And to him drew her close, until his breath
Now coming fast and quick, fell warm
Upon her cheek ; then spoke, half whispering,
thus :

" My love for thee now me compels
To do as thy sweet will doth bid ; this task
Thou hast upon me laid do I
Endure for love of thee and thee alone ;
But ere I go upon this quest,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

I ask of thee, mine own, just one sweet touch
Of thy dear lips to pledge the troth
Of friendship true that 'tween us stands for aye!"
She stayed not to decide the right
Or wrong, but with the impulse of her heart—
An amorous blush now mantling rich
Her damask cheeks—quick pursed her rose-hued
lips,

Them raised and lightly touchéd his.
The pledge thus sealed, a moment's silence came;
And then again he stole, and yet
Again, the luscious fruit, till his life's blood
Throbbéd fierce within his veins, and stirred
His passion to the very point of pain.
"So, darling, now!"—he quick exclaimed—
"Do I go forth inspired by thy sweet will,
And with a purpose of thy trust
Made strong; my way illumined ever by
The radiance of thy virtuous soul,
To wrest with Fate for one year and a day."

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

He gently led her, and they turned
Their footsteps t'ward the place whence they had
 come,
In silence—for their hearts were full.
Then when they stood to part, the pledge they
 both
Renewed again, and yet again,
With fervent wishes heart to heart expressed.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

CANTO II.

Prelude.

Just as the apple ripe to earth must fall,
So must men, strangely, come and go
To the City by Tamesis bound, that doth
Unto her, like a magnet, draw
The people and the riches of the earth,
And the world's centre thus become.

The Quest.

In season due had Lucius made his way
To this City faméd and fair,
Where potent for evil or good are wealth
And fame and greatness ; and where crime
Doth in its glory reign ; where shame hides not
Its head, but rears its hideous form
Aloft, and charity and truth lie low.
Alone among the myriad souls,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Of which in years ago he had been one,
There came to him, with all its pain
And force, the sense of utter loneliness.
Here all was cold and strange, and there
Did seem a change in all things that to him
Familiar were in beardless youth.
This face and that, in mem'ry's store still held,
Some other aspect by mutation wore ;
The busy streets, the gay and brilliant throng,
The ceaseless hum of vig'rous life
Seemed strange, and though once charmed, now
vexéd much
His soul, and set his brain a-swim.
Then, too, he frequent sought from day to day
The outward vestige of some place
Renowned, the scene of some gay exploit of
His youthful days, but sought in vain,
And disappointed turned and went his way.
Alas ! yet more, at heart he felt
A sickening want, a vacuous pain, the need

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Of some sweet solace that could rest
His soul ; a link seemed missing from the chain
Of his life's span and circumstance.
And as he sped along the busy ways,
Thinking of all the past, and, too,
Of what might be, his manly bosom heaved
With anguish, and sent forth a sigh.
So time rolled on, while Lucius vainly sought
Some tidings of the mother and
The child—who now again within his heart
Held place. To him familiar came
The gentle murmur of the baby soul,
The infant smile, the sparkling eye,
That told what lip and tongue could not yet lisp.
So in his heart was struck a chord
That sharp rang out a tone of sorrow for
The little maid ; and, too, he felt
A pang of keen regret that his strong arm
Could not her shield against the gibes,
The torturing slights, the painful scorn that on

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Her sinless head the world would heap,
To mark its censure cold and cruel, and show
Its horror of her parents' crime.

The coming of Fame.

Thus, no reward attending his long quest—
For not a trace within, nor yet
Without Lud's town he of the truants found—
Lucius sick at heart became,
And knew not where his weary steps to turn.
Perchance it came that one day when
He strode with saddened guise along the way
That monarchs have for ages trod
With men, in progress to the City fair,
There sudden fell upon his ear
A ballad's sweet refrain, that set his heart
Abeat, within his breast did stir
Strange feelings, and a mem'ry sharp awoke
Of other times ; for the song that now
Some sweet voice tuned and sent forth on the air,

.LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Was of his soul conceived, and by
His hand was wrought with skill and loving care
Into a rare rich melody.

Charmed, he stood bound to the spot to list,
To the words of the song that came
From the lips of the singer yet unseen ;
And, like a thirsting soul, he drank
Them in, with a zest none but him knew—
For was this not a token sure,
Of the fame that long he'd sought in vain ?—
And thrilléd through with pleasure and
With pride, he crooned aloud th' enchanting tones,
As through the air they rose and fell.

BALLAD.

Cynthia lived in a garden fair,
By the mill with its stream a-flowing,
'Mid flowers most rich in scent, and rare,
Of colours bright and glowing ;
At even when the kine were lowing,
She would steal by the woodland way,
And song burst from her soul o'erflowing—
Ah! who will steal her heart away ?

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

So sang the singer ; as the last note died
Upon the air, he list'ning stood,
No longer calm, but by hot passion stirred,
And was impelled to quick pursue
His steps toward the place whence that voice
came.

Some rapid strides, and then a turn,
Brought plainly to his view a motley crowd,
Within whose crescent form he saw
A woman fair in years and plainly clad,
Who, seated at a harp, now ran
Her fingers o'er the strings in fancy's vein,
And formed a rondeau 'tween the song.
Before her, on the pavement's raised edge,
There stood a child, as plainly clothed,
Of summers less than ten, who now did face,
With features sad, th' expectant crowd—
That one to other smiled and spoke, or shook
Their heads, or gave a shrug or nod :
And out beyond their pale did Lucius stand.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Then, lifting up her voice again
In song, the child sent forth in treble notes
Her sweet refrain, while to the strings'
Sweet tones the harpist joined her alto rich.
By the melody that full strong
Now to his soul appealed was Lucius moved
Beyond a passive state, and he,
Urged by the spirit that him ruled within,
Pressed through the crowd, so stood beside
The child, and, conscious not of aught around,
His mellow voice and full he joined
In tenor strain, until the ballad fine
Rose in harmonic grandeur through
The morning air. And thus the trio sang:

She was as graceful as debonair,
Yet never she thought of bestowing
Her heart on youth, nor dark nor fair—
But love and fate, without our knowing,
Life's rosy way with thorns are strowing,
While sweet content is ours each day—

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Cynthia love-thyme now was sowing—
Ah! who will steal her heart away?

One day the god with golden hair,
Came down the stream a-rowing,
He saw the lovely maiden there,
And, in her breast his arrow throwing,
Set her sweet face all a-glowing.
So Cynthia fell a willing prey
To love—to her own undoing—
Ah! Cupid stole her heart away.

The old-world tale is ever going
Its round in the same sure way,
Though each day men and maids are vowing
They'll ne'er give their hearts away!

Grace and Alms.

The strange accession thus by Lucius made
Had first the list'ning crowd amazed,
But th' enriched tone the little choir
Did by his soul-wrought voice so gain,
Their wonder changed to admiration great,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

That held each silent till the end ;
Then were their voices raised in joyous praise.
Heeding not their clam'rous demand
For rend'ring of the ballad o'er again,
He sought their alms with courteous grace,
And by such gen'rous gifts the swelling throng
Their pleasure and their joy did mark,
That Lucius arduous bore the treasure gained
Unto the harpist fair, and laid
It, smiling, glad, within her ample lap ;
Then of a sudden, heeding not
Her thanks, he turned, and quickly fled the scene.

Memory's Trial.

His mind was busy, as he strode,
With the scene in which he had performed
So strange a part, he scarce knew why ;
And as—his bosom something filled with pride—
He thought him of the singers fair,
Some quickened thought was in upon him borne,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

That the questioning glance which shot
Swiftly from the harpist's eyes, and keen
Had pierced his own, as quick they met,
Was not in that brief space of time first seen.
And as this thought revolved within
The myriad chambers of his brain, his steps
Fell faster, and, like one possessed,
He hastened through the City's busy ways :
Nor how, nor when could he decide
Those eyes had his once held before, nor where,
Until at last, with rapid pulse,
His recollection woke, and led his thoughts
In train to years far past and gone,
When life was one long merry dance, when care
Was strange, and everything was joy.

The Awakening.

Now memory's flash recalled sharp and clear,
That she who had so deftly touched
The shiv'ring strings, and thus had taught them
speech

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

To charm the human soul, and more,
Had by their music stirred the rapturous chords
Within his breast, was the mother
Of his child, whom even now he sought to find !
The singer, then, might she not be
That child ? he asked himself ; but felt not sure.
Like bolt of Jove from Heav'n hurled,
This revelation did upon him fall,
Him struck with such prodigious force,
That for the moment every sense was numbed,
And he, stagg'ring, well nigh fell ;
Then his blood was chilled to Arctic cold,
Then as quick attained a fiery glow ;
His limbs beneath him shook, and on his brow
Great beads of dewy sweat were wrought.
A time he made some post a friendly hold,
Till the heat of the stroke was o'er ;
Then, strength returning, and his mind made clear,
He quick determined to retrace
His hasty steps, and seek afresh the twain.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

The Quest Renewed.

Scarce half the time it did require
To bring him hence, sufficed him to return,
And, full of anxious thought, he searched
The close surroundings of the spot where he
Had seen the singers but a time
So brief before. Hither and there he went,
Yet not of them a sign he found ;
Nor did the pleasant sound of music sweet
Fall now again upon his ear.
Full of despair, when fell the dark'ning night,
Weary, with hunger biting keen,
He homeward trudged, through streets that de-
vicious led
By noisome ways, where crime was rife
And decency unknown, out into some
Broad road, whence sped the dainty coach,
With beauty fine or purse-proud dame within ;
Where dandy stepped with lightsome tread
The pavement wide, and noble sires rubbed arm

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

To arm with bloated gods of gold.
But of these things not one was seen or known
To him who now, with head cast down,
Did moodily pursue his way alone,
Enwrapped in fancy's ample fleece,
That brought familiar to his mind again
Faces and facts in scenes of old.

The Outcast.

From this reverie was he sudden roused,
As to his sense some other form
There seemed, which, phantom-like, did pace a step
In even measure with his own ;
And as he, half in fear, did faster step,
So stepped the shadow by his side.
Yet phantom was it not, as soon he knew,
For now a voice, that strangely rang
In accord with the tenor of his thought,
Did greet him in a tone subdued,
That something gay assumed, yet did not hide
A note of sorrow in its depth.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

He turned, to find his fancy wrong, for though
The shadow did a woman prove,
It was not she of whom his thought had been.
Thus by the trick his fancy played
Deceived, and vexéd by some tim'rous suit
The siren made—that jarred upon
His finer sense of soul—he turned to go
His way. But ere a step he made,
There came into his mind a purpose new,
Of charity for one who seemed
The grace of gentle birth to hold, and, too,
Of feature moulded handsome, fine,
Though paled with care and by deep sorrow lined,
Whose timid speech did him incline
To judge as one in need of helping hand.

The Balm of Sympathy.

Of her he sought, in gentle tone,
Some reason for the plea that she had made ;
Whereon she did, dissembling, strive
Her modesty to hide, and brazen out

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

The part she did profess to play ;
But when his pity for her sullied soul
Lucius, with sorrow, full expressed,
And to her better self made strong appeal,
Then did the woman sob aloud.
Touched to the heart, and by compassion moved,
Lucius bade her tell how he
Might now assuage her pain and sore distress.

The Misery of Solitude.

With lip to lip tight pressed, the woman for
A moment gazéd keen into
His eyes, as though to gauge the purpose of
His mind ; then said in falt'ring voice :
" Alas ! no friend have I the wide world o'er,
An isolated soul, alone
Am I, and, like a cork on ocean vast,
At will of wind and wave, am tossed
Upon the sea of cold humanity.
In no friend's breast can I confide ;

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Nor sympathy, nor aid, in hour of trial
Know I, and in my bosom lone
Have borne for years the burden of my woes.
Ah, you ! " she wailed, " a man, can ne'er
Conceive the pain of utter solitude,
The torment of a burdened soul
That ever must subdue its slightest pulse,
Each instinct to itself confine.
To stand thus desolate, alone, without
One heart's response, must surely be
God's greatest punishment for such as I
Who may from duty's path have strayed.
Thus long have I lived out this strained life,
Till now my stricken heart hath burst
Its bonds, incontinent to longer hold
Its impulses, its passions pent,
And have I come abroad this night unto
The haunts of men, that I may gain
Some sympathy, by human voice expressed,
Knowing that by wiles and cajol'ry,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

With which my sex hath been by Heav'n endowed,
I might some man so tempt that he
Would bold profess his love, though 'twere a lie.
But by thy kindly grace hast thou
Me quite unarmed, and of the torture that
My soul in thralldom held, hath me
Confessed, my bosom of its burden eased."
A sigh, as though of pain and joy
In one, she gave, then held her peace awhile.
Anxious to know yet more of her
Who so strangely spoke, Lucius, gentle, drew
'Tween sobs and tears, as to and fro
They strode, her life's sad tale, her history.

The Woman's Tale.

"My father was a country squire
Of small estate, but proud;" the woman told.
"I was his only child: on me
Such gifts and blessings as were his to give
He showered, and naught I lacked

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA:

That might ensure my happiness and ease.
Thus, bright and all too soon fled by
The pleasant summer of my maiden years.
Then 'twas by accident I gained
Acquaintance with a youth of honoured name,
And between us soon was formed
A mutual tie, which seemed our hearts to hold
Together by its tender grasp.
Alas! my father wished my hand to go
To my cousin, that house and field
Might to him fall, and our own race live on
By issue of the line direct.
Strong did I try this bidding to obey;
But heart and mind rebelled, for he,
Who was to hold me his alone for aye,
Proved but a man of baser clay,—
A clownish fool, that had nor heart nor soul.
Oft urged, his suit so gave me pain
That, in sheer despair, I my lover prayed
Would me rescue from the cruel fate

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Which seemed so sure impending o'er my head;
He did at first refuse, and more
Than once, yet so frequent did I beg his aid
To 'scape the meshes of the net
Which threatened me to close within its toils,
That finally he did consent.
Hither we came in haste one summer's eve;
Soon then were wed, and loving lived
Most happy in our simple, homely life,
For a brief time; until there rose
One day the venom of a jealous tongue,
To wreck the hopes our hearts contained,
And stay the happy voyage thus begun:
My cousin, from whose clutches I
Had well escaped, soon found us out, and then,
By constant calumny and slander vile,
His spite—that littleness of man—did wreak
Upon me; and thus not alone
Did shame my own fair name, but my husband
Too so foully wronged, that friends

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

On every hand from us did turn aside.
Ere the law's most cumbrous aid
We could invoke to right our wrongs, and prove
To all the world the monstrous lie,
He, my only solace, comforter and guide,
Was, by the cruel torture which
The slander bred, of reason now bereft,
And by his own hand tragic died.
Bent low by grief intense, beyond the pale
Of all that, in its kindest mood,
The world might give to salve the sobbing wounds
With which my lonesome heart was pained,
I to my father's roof then fled full fast,
That I might gain his pardon and
His sheltering arm ; only to find—ah me !
O'er all things change, my parent dead,
And ruling in his stead the sland'rer vile.
He cruelly taunted me, and bade
Me share his hearth and bed usurped ; but I,
Wrought to the fiercest heat of ire

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

By this base jest, to insults great adjoin'd,
Him struck, and saw him fall. Then from
The place that gave me birth I sped, till hence
I came again, this time to hide
My being from all human eyes, and bear
The burden of my woes alone.
Yet hath this solitude well-nigh destroyed
My better self, and nearly wrecked
My woman's soul—that virtue rare, which must
Be ever one with life's sweet strength—
But thou, by Heav'n well sent, hast me redeem'd,
To live again still undefiled."

Ways Divergent.

Her sorrowing tale now ceased, she heaved
A deep drawn sigh, and from her eyes
Wiped soft the quickly rising tear; then told,
When Lucius asked of her, the name
Her honoured sire had borne—to his surprise—
For he the name well knew, and blushed

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

To find his confidant the child of one
Whom all the countryside esteemed.
To her a courtly compliment he paid,
And of his aid to remedy
The wrongs she had sustained, he spoke in pledge,
Then for her gracious thanks a smile
He gave ; her bade a courteous farewell,
And, turning, both then went their way.

CANTO III.

Autumn's Eve.

Th' autumnal mist, in curling wreaths,
Was spreading o'er the peaceful vale ;
Beyond the hills, whose curving lines were set
In grey against the purple west,
The sun had gone his glorious way, to make
The brilliant Antipodean day ;
And in the east, majestic rode, full orb'd
In glowing gold, the autumn moon.
As thus the passing day merged into night,
And as the shadows deeper crept,
At gentle pace, within the woody dell,
The blackbird trilled his final strain,
While o'er the valley came the fluty call
Of owls, now seeking out their prey.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

The Haunting Night.

'Mid the silence of the approaching night,
Amanda trod alone the path
That through the wood its tortuous way pursued.
The tenor of her gentle thought,
And the weirdness of the silent way,
Induced within her maiden breast
Some fear, and she to gain the open mead
Beyond the wood now quickly strode.
Thus hast'ning, on her ear there fell a sound
Unlike the many noises strange
That in the tranquil night do much abound,
And haunt the quiet of the wood.
The crackling twig, the falling leaf, the start
Of some small rodent at her feet,
The chafer's humming bass, the weasel's cry,
The moaning wind, the night jar's note,
She heard, as 'neath the shadow of an oak
She stood, with every sense alert ;

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

And then, at last, again that stranger cry
Came on the wind and thrilled her through.

The Wanderers.

With courage fresh, yet not without some dread,
She cautious stepped the leafy way
Anew, t'ward whence the sound did seem to come ;
And soon again the cry rose up,
Close by—it seemed like some poor soul in pain.
Then, by the dancing beams of light
The moon now shed between the wind-rocked
trees,
Amanda faint discerned beneath
A bushy clump two forms lay low, and one
Was crying out in sad despair.
Uncertain how to act, and held by fear,
She for a moment thoughtful stood,
Till through the silence came the piteous cry,
That stirred within her bosom fair
The tend'rest impulse of her nature sweet.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Then, putting fear aside, she stepped
Across the turfy waste toward the twain,
And gently touched the child—for such
It proved to be—who, thus alarmed, full gazed
In silence on her features fair,
O'er which the fitful moonbeams played and gave
Her eyes a light divine, her smile
Sweet grace, and with silver glint her hair.

The Angel of Joy.

“Thou art an angel good whom God
Hath sent! I knew He would my prayer attend!”
The child exclaimed; and wond'ring still,
Her eyes kept fixed upon Amanda's face.
She, blushing, smiled, and asked her need;
Whereon the little one sobbed loud and cried,
“Ah! see how now my mother lies
Here by my side, and thus hath lain for long,
Since 'fore the sun began to fall
Down to the west; and though I have her called

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Again and yet again, she hath
Not spoken aught to me—and oh! and oh!
Good angel, say she is not dead.”
Again the little speaker sobbed and wailed,
Awaking loud th’ echoing wood;
With face clasped in her tiny hands she rocked
Her body ceaseless to and fro.

The Gentle Cure.

The while Amanda knelt her down beside
The woman prostrate lying there;
The still face peered into, the tight-clasped throat
Released, then from her girdle took
A little phial, some simple cordial poured
Between the tight’ning lips, and then
The chilly hands she tender chafed. Meanwhile
She to the child in hopeful strain
Did speak, her soothed, and stayed the choking
sob.
By watchful eye Amanda saw

· IDYLLS OF ARCADIA : ·

A tremor through the rigid body run,
And heard a sigh the lips escape ;
Came then a feeble groan, and other signs
Of life renewed. Thus her heart joyed,
The little one she bade be joyous too.
Some moments hence the woman spoke
In rambling tones ; ere long full power of speech
She had regained, and to her feet,
By gentle suasion, rose ; then, strong embraced
Within Amanda's arms, did make
Her tardy way toward the modest home
Where dwelt the gentle parents of
This sister true and brave, who to the child,
That silent, awed, her close beside
Now paced, did seem still more of Heaven's grace,
An angel wondrous, good and kind.
Then simples sweet dispensed, with kindly care,
The wand'ring twain did soon revive ;
In them the restful couch did quick induce
That spirit sweet which Morpheus doth,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

With tender force, o'ercome the tired and sad.
Meanwhile the hours had rapid fled,
And night's meridian was well-nigh attained.

Potency Supreme.

Naught doth man wot whereby he may
Arrest the rising tide or time delay ;
With other forms of Nature can
He deal, to his own use them well apply ;
But than his will a nobler power
Doth make the ocean roll and fall, the sun
To rise, and in its glory form
Light's regal fire, the day to pass, then wane
Into the night, and through the gloom
The silv'ry moon to shed her brilliant glow,
Then come again the rising day.
All this Divinely fixed, with purpose sure
And regular unvarying change.
Thus is man's destiny, like lapse of time,
Well governed by a potent hand.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Delirium's Tale.

The silent hours of night ebbed out full fast,
While sleep the world unconscious held,
Then rare Aurora from her slumber rose,
And blushing, crimsoned pale the east.
Alas! the day brought heavy care upon
The house, which to the roving pair
Had been a haven peaceful in their need.
Privation, care and all the ills
That kindred are thereto, had wrought disease
Within the woman's body frail,
Whilst toilsome tramp and ill-kept rest had spent
The little strength that still remained.
Thus morn her found in fever's dreaded grasp,
A victim to the grievous ill
Of wild delirium's ravings loud and vain.
Day followed day, yet still she tossed
In restless spirit o'er the downy bed :
Her woeful plaint was ever for

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Some long-lost friend, her constant fear, 'mid
shrieks
Expressed, was of her daughter, who,
With vengeful hate her scorned and strong re-
viled
As mother of a bastard child.
Aloud the woman cried for him—unnamed—
To snatch her from this dreaded wrath;
And of repentance of some crime unknown
She spoke, wailed forth in long-drawn sobs
Remorse, and abject did forgiveness crave.

Revelation.

It chanced one eve, when its full heat
The fever had attained, and reason with
Delirium seemed the while to blend,
The sufferer uttered low in plea a name
That to Amanda's heart quick sped
Like arrow barbed, and gave so sharp a pain
That only by her stronger will

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Supreme did she retain her senseful state.
Those who watched with her the fever's
Turn, nor saw the stroke, nor her blanched face,
For their senses keen they lent
To note precise the name the woman spoke
Again and o'er again, in sad,
Soft tones, with painful sobs and sighs between.
He, patron of the scalpel and
The drug, who gravely by the bedside stood,
And silent watched the patient there,
Now turned and paced the chamber wide, then
told
The watchers that if but they could
Him find for whom the sufferer louder called,
His presence might mean life renewed.

Fate's Cruel Decree.

To all but one these words no hope conveyed :
'Twas on Amanda's soul they fell
With meaning weighty and with force so cruel

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

That scarce she knew life's charm just then.
Gently from the sick room she withdrew,
And to her chamber quiet fled;
Here she upon her snowy bed reclined,
With careless grace, and her heart-pain
Something eased by tears that copious flowed.
Thus prostrate some time having lain,
She rose, with resolution formed, and calm.
" 'Tis cruel! 'Tis very cruel!" she said,
In musing strain, as from her features she
Removed in haste the tears' sad tale.
" 'Tis cruel, indeed, that on this very eve
To which with joyful hope had I
Long looked as one that greatest pleasure should
Me bring, that I must to the tryst,
Which one year and a day ago was made
'Tween him and me—Alas! for me
It cannot now be fraught with pleasure's joy—
And I must tell that she whom fate
Hath unto me so strangely thus resigned,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Is just the mother of the child
Who now by Nature must him father call."
Again she wept, and did lament
The duty which an unrelenting fate
Upon her had so cruelly forced.
Alas! there was a life to save, and though
She must now lose that which had been
The sweetest hope within her heart, she did
Resolve the duty must be done ;
And to Heaven for strength she prayed to bear
The burden of this sorrow sore :
Then on her mission she at once set out,
Just as the day gave birth to eve.

The Watch.

Twice had the regal sun gone down, twice ris'n
Again, and by its gen'rous heat
Warmed the chill air of Autumn's short'ning day,
Since the strange summons, by strange means,
Him reached ; Lucius with pained heart obeyed.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

In the sweet calm of early morn,
Within the chamber sad 'twas now he stood,
To fate resigned, in wonder deep
What scene that fate might will should next be
played

In the strange drama of his life.
But for the sick one lying there, now still,
Yet ever and anon half waked,
With fitful, heartdrawn sobs, and grievous cries
Of evil pain, he was alone.
He, resting by the ancient lattice light,
Viewed the peaceful scene that out
Before his vision spread its beauteous charm,
And soothéd sweet his troubled soul.
Thought chaséd thought in rapid sequence through
The mirrored chambers of his mind ;
And, to him came again, in mem'ry clear,
The past—its sorrows and its joys.
He thus in reverie lost was conscious not
Of what around him might transpire.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

The Kiss of Grace.

Soon she who had within the long embrace
Of bounteous sleep reposed, awoke,
And, silent, gazed around in wonder, for
To her the world seemed set awry,
Her view confused—as yet her errant mind
Refused obedience to her will.
Slowly the power of thought returned ; upon
Her dawned some mem'ry faint of what
Had been ; but then the figure standing there,
His features cut in outline clear
Against the brilliant morn's effulgent light,
To her appeared so wondrous strange.
At last her mind its potent force retrieved,
And him she certain knew again.
Some time she gazed, his name then faintly called—
Yet doubting he were flesh and blood—
He, startled, turned, and to her side quick stepped,
The feeble hand in silence took,
Her gently kissed, and bade her be at peace.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

But she, her lips by sweet smile wreathed,
Her soul-sad eyes lit up by fervent fire,
Her cheeks with rosy blush aglow,
Her pulse awakened by the kiss of grace,
Could not for joy her silence hold,
And hastened now to free her burdened soul.
In whispers of the painful past
She spoke ; avowed her errors, and declared
Her sorrow for his suffering pain ;
And contrite, did she ask his pardon full,
For all the wrong she had him done.
Then smiling sweeter still, she graceful bent
Her arm about his manly neck,
And to her lips his drew by tender force.
To find thus changed she who was once
So cruel and cold, did Lucius much amaze,
And in a moment warmed with joy
His heart that had with pain and doubt been
chilled ;
Th' unhappy past dispersed, and brought

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

The present sweet to cheer anew his soul ;
And by the new love thus imbued,
He gave with rapture of his mercy all.

Interlude.

Autumn, the time of restful calm
And peace, is merging into winter bleak
And cold ; the frost doth hold within
Its grip the barren soil ; the biting blast
Now whistles loud its shrilly song,
The baréd branches of the trees among ;
The lordly sun but little shines,
And, like a bashful maiden, half obscures
His beauty 'neath a sheltering veil :
Once and again some distant call doth through
The crispy air resound, but else
The whole earth o'er a hallowed silence rests,
That bears within the light Divine,
And to its faults awakens quick the soul.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Heaven's Grace.

In the winter morn's grey light,
'Ere Sol the realms of day had well attained,
A strangely mingled group there stood
Around the couch of her who late had found,
By Heaven's grace, sweet rest unto
Her woman's soul. Pain and great toil had worn
Her body frail, and knowing well
That to her life could not now long remain,
She had implored that for her peace
Complete, and that the world might not their
child
Deride, as one ignobly born,
The union found anew should be confirmed
By law and church's holy rite;
"For now have I," exclaimed she, "by God's
Great mercy learn'd that we before
In error took our course, and by our thought
The world to shame, did ourselves shame."
And to her wish had Lucius glad agreed.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

So came it now that he who held
The cure of souls, with clerk and warden, and
A choral sept, with friends a few,
Were there the holy bond to ratify.

The Bridal.

No vesture nuptial, nor flower
Symbolic graced her who was thus a bride ;
Nor had she maid her sole commands
To bear ; nor was there aught to give the scene
An air of brightness or of joy,
Save an ivy garland, with three lilies pure
Enwreathed between, wrought by the hands
Of her whose heart had now all hope resigned.
As the morn's sun, now greeting day,
Shed its first rays from out the east, and lit
The chamber with a fiery glow,
The dulcet voices of the little choir
Arose, and with a gladsome chant,
Broke the solemn silence that had been.
Then as the last note softly died
Away, the priest the office did begin.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

God's Will.

With noble grace, and o'er her mouth
A smile, the bride at first her part full well
Sustained ; but 'twas a whisper slight
In which she gave the pledge of faith and of
Obedience true unto her lord,
And by an effort only did she hold
Her finger to receive the ring.
Then, as the priest his pious blessing gave,
The peachen blush that had her cheeks
Diffuséd o'er, now fading, passed away,
And came a sickly pallor there.
Yet none then saw with dread these signs so grave,
Nor judged their import cause for fear,
Until, the choral tones ascending once
Again, they saw her face convulsed
As if by pain, her lips part quick in speech,
But dumb, her tighter grasp the hand
Of Lucius that hers held, her eyes to his
Appealing raised. Alarmed, he quick

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

In answer touched with his her vibrant lips—
They still expressed a gracious smile—
Then, at that touch, a spasm shook her through :
From out the windows of her eyes
The light dissolved, and with the hymn's refrain,
“ Thy will, O God, be done ! ” her head
Fell heavy to her husband's shielding arm,
And, smiling sweetly still, she died.

CANTO IV

Of Men.

Nature hath for a base whereon to rear,
By glorious means in her good time,
The superstructure of her finer art,
That clothes with beauty common clay,
Firm planted in the breast of mortal man,
The coarser passions of the beast
Untamed; but to each hath given a soul—
Than which no subtler power doth
Any creature of her mould possess.
This, by man's constant, watchful care,
May curb the brutal sense so blunt and vile,
And sweet evolve a reason pure,
A noble mind and heart of tender strain,
Till he transcends all meaner kind.
Alas! not all can read aright or know
The message that within them is;

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

They, heeding not the promptings sharp and
clear
That rise within the human breast,
Let passions run full riot in their blood,
And baser thoughts their minds engage.

The Song of June.

O'er swelling hill and fertile valley mead
Prevailed the spicy fragrance of
The ripening hay, that, blending rich
With tendrous woodbine's sweet perfume
And clover's balmy scent, an odour rare,
Dispensed upon the stilly air
Of summer's noon. Across the silent vale,
By distance sweet subdued, there came
The blithesome voices of the merry throng,
Who lightly tossed and gathered to
In turn, the sweet and fragrant meadow crop.
To Lucius came the sweet refrain
Which with the zephyr gently rose and fell

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Like tones of some Æolian lyre,
As leisurely he paced the lane that by
The hillside wound, and full enjoyed
The cooler air the umbrous trees ensured.
Two years had gently ebbed away
Since the last strange epoch in his life,
And in him had been wrought by Fate
And circumstance some change. Graver his
mien,
His step its facile spring had lost,
His locks, still ample, now were touched with
grey.

The Parley.

As he, in meditation wrapt,
Slow made his way, upon his ear there fell
Two voices, waging high dispute.
The one was loud and strong, of speech full spiced
With vulgar oaths and curses spent
Upon the other, whose young voice, though
small,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Was plain and full of brave resource.

" Ope quick that gate, I say, before I lay

This whip across thy pockéd face! "

Heard Lucius shouted strident through the air,

And, curious, hastened to'ard the sound.

" Not me! " replied the weaker voice. " D'ye
think

Uns now thy lackey an' thy slave!

As for thy blather 'bout the whip—ha! ha!

Why, an' e'd better try un now,

For by the powers I'd make 'e bloated jowl

Un purpler still wi' uns oon blood,

An' soar un deep for aye wi' e's withy 'ere,

A soar for ivery pang o' pain

Uns giv'd my sister an' er father too! "

But fifty yards along the lane,

Now Lucius saw the village squire astride

A restless cob, with whip raised high;

And by the gate, a pace aside, a youth

Still in his teens, but tall, his eye

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Upon th' uplifted whip, his hand agrasp
A sturdy wand, prepared to guard.
Full well the rider Lucius knew for him
Of whom report did evil speak,
As one who had usurped a noble home,
Turned out of house the honest poor, and
 wronged
Their daughters, and their sons menaced,
Who lived himself a vicious life of shame.

The Duel.

While Lucius yet considered how
He might well act in this strange scene, the whip
Descended swift, with foulest oath
Expressed. But quick the youth by parry stayed
The blow, which harmless to him fell
Aside, and 'ere the rider could regain
His pose, the stripling's wand was lain
With vig'rous stroke across his unctuous neck,
Whereon he shrieked with pain, and cursed

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Such skilled repulse ; then by rage's heat consumed,
With clenched teeth and savage yell,
Struck fiercely at the youth, whose arm received—
By faulty ward—the half-stayed blow.
Ere he could return the stroke another fell,
But this he fenced, and many more
That down upon him thick'y rained, with skill,
Though not a rap could he re-pay.
Thus held at bay by beardless youth, the Squire
Became enraged the more, and sought,
By craven trick, his violent end to gain.
A feint he made, intending thus
His adversary to confuse, but quick
The youth aimed well a blow, that sent
His headgear flying to the wind ; yet then
Failed he to rally guard in time,
And must the horseman's crippling blow have had
But that a rearward step alert
Him placed beyond the flying whip's cruel sweep,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Which fell upon the horse's hide.
As though deep wounded by the spur's dull point,
The creature quivered through with pain,
And plaintive cried, then reared high and plunged
Ahead, its rider throwing by
The lurch ; anon into a gallop broke,
And madly fled along the road.
The Squire, fast held by stirrups' grip, his head
Now hanging to the ground, shrieked loud
His oaths in fear and pain, which served to urge
The flying steed to faster stride.
But soon the rider senseless hung, and swayed
His body too and fro between
The steed's fast moving limbs, until at last
He fell away, and with a thud
Came heavy to the ground—the horse fled on.

The Wreck.

Then Lucius and the sturdy youth—
Who, struck by wondrous fear had helpless stood
And dumb—ran toward the silent form,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Which, huddled up, laid in the road, now placed
Beyond all passions' ken, a mass
Of wreckéd flesh and bone, a gruesome sight.
Each horrorstruck did brief exclaim
Upon the mangled body 'fore their view,
Then, silent, mutual lent their aid
To move it gently to the shady sward.
That done, the youth, by Lucius bid,
Swift bent his stride toward the village near
For help and for the surgeon's aid.
Meantime did Lucius simple means apply,
The bleeding wounds to staunch, and stay
The waste of life, now ebbing fast away,
And try the absent conscience to
Revive, by cooling water that he from
A limpid pool hard by obtained.

The Appraisement.

Soon came the startled villagers, in ones
And twos, just as the news them found ;

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

In apron, smock, bare-armed, with spade or scythe
Or rake, or other tool of trade.

All gazed in wonder, none with pain, upon
The figure of the manor's lord ;

And even when the surgeon told that naught
His skill could do to save that life,

None shed a tear, nor spoke in pity, nor
Regret, so thorough was their hate.

One ancient dame her mind thus plainly spoke :

" That be uns due, I allus told

Tud be a vilint death for 'e ! " whereon

Heads nodded, and all did agree.

The Reckoning.

From the mouth of the senseless Squire there
came

A sudden, strange, inhuman groan,

That, like the roaring of some stream deep laid
Beneath the rocky fissure in

The cave, doth for the moment fill with awe

The bosom of th' explorer bold,

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Now breaking on the silence strain'd, did much
Affright the curious crowd around.
The surgeon deftly passed some cordial through
The tight closed lips, and in a while
Another groan, but louder than before,
Startled the gaping throng. And then
A sigh, and cry of pain escaped ; the eyes
Full ope'd, and on the folk near by
The Squire bent hard his questioning gaze.
To speak he then essayed. But now,
Alas! the spirit of the voice did fail
The will of him who but so short
A time before, in full enjoyment of
Sweet life, had cursed aloud, and swore,
And by his brutal strength had terror wrought
In every rustic breast save one.
Helpless and dumb, thus humbled must he lie,
Till death in mercy claimed his soul.
Yet 'ere the end did come he tried again
Some words to speak aloud, and failed.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

But to the moving lips Lucius bent close
His ear, to catch some meaning from
The whisper faint that issued forth ; yet then
He only heard in broken parts
Confessed the story of a wrongful life.
“ Die—like—dog—due—bad—wrong—hate me!
Muriel—cousin—manor—father—mine—Ah!
Restore—money—soul—pain—good-bye! ”
A sigh, a gasp, and to the vale of death
The Squire descended gently then.

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

CANTO V.

The Wedding Morn.

High on the hill which overbore, and held
In view the emerald vale below.
Whence wound the purling trouty stream toward
Th' ample waters of its parent Thames,
Towered far aloft the tapering spire
That formed the crowning glory which
Some craftsman bold in mediaeval days
Reared o'er the stately fane that by
His love and wit was deftly wrought, to mark
A sainted martyr's lasting shrine.
Beside these hallowed walls now lay at rest,
Within the great ancestral tomb,
The earthly remnant of the hated Squire;
And on the blazoned tablet which
Recorded noble deeds and virtues great,
By his progenitors well attained,
Was scribed in plainest style the late lord's name,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Without the legend that "his end
Was peace," nor grace nor virtue of him told.
But this was of th' abhorrent past—
None now the gay and wanton Squire concerned,
For a dame, fair in mien and name,
Held sway, and bounteous played the part of lord.

Festive Joy.

Here then to-day—the brightest day
That ever sweet and rosy June had seen,
When o'er the earth the lordly sun
Shone full, and not a fleck of cloud obscured
The vasty range of Heaven's dome—
Were signs of festive joy on every side.
The tap'ring spire, from whence it sprung,
Above the massy tower, unto its peak,
That seeming pierced th' ethereal blue,
Was wreathed with garlands wove by maidens
fair,

! IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

Of lilies white, and marguerites,
And golden iris from the rippling stream,
With leaves of forest oak entwined.
And o'er the path that to the Gothic porch
Led by a winding way, were strung
Festoons of roses, rich in scent and hue.
Then, too, the sacred house within,
The maidens had with roses rich adorned,
And treasures from the woodland way;
While just where chancel met the wide spanned
aisle,
Was raised aloft a fairy bower
Of tropic fern and oleander sweet,
With gorgeous lilies from the east,
And orchids rare—a tribute rendered
By her who held the manor now.
All this and more was done to mark with joy
A gladsome time, the wedding morn
Of Lucius, poet, and Amanda, maid.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

The Joyful Throng.

Now every hale and able soul,
From tottering babes to sires bent low with age,
And dames much withered by the wear
Of time, had gathered round about the church;
And 'neath the roof of roses rich
On either side, stood twice a score and ten
Of children fair, in comely frocks
Of blameless white, with just a cincture broad
Of rosy pink, and o'er their heads,
Turbans of silken stuff of roseate hue.
The spirit of elation high,
And joyous mirth that was the while abroad,
Ceased when some robust voice exclaimed,
"See, here she comes! Here comes the bonny
bride!"
Then every eye was turned toward
The gate—spanned by a floral arch that bore
Some hearty wish of true and good intent—

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

To see the maid whom all at heart adored,
And every tongue acclaimed as one,
In wonder at the beauteous sight beheld.

The Coming of the Bride

First came the parish beadle, puffed
With great concern, marking his lofty stride
By staff, with ribbons gay adorned.
Next was the bride, the cynosure of all,
Serenely beautiful, in robe
Of snowy silk, with golden braid broad hemmed,
Which, caught beneath her shapely bust
By a girdle wrought in burnished gold,
With sparkling beryl set in links
Between, fell to her feet in classic fold.
An eagle's claw of gold—the crest
The bridegroom bore, with arms, by right of birth—
And lineage long derived—rich set
With fiery opal blent with Eastern pearl,
Upon her bosom gathered to

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

The bridal stole, and held a blush-white rose.
A wreath of orange flowers bedecked
Her brow, and o'er her head in folds there fell
A silken veil of texture fine.
For her stay the bride her father had ;
Behind came waiting maids thirteen.
First, holding place of honour in the train,
Was the little one whom she
Had found, now long ago, at eve, within
The wood—the bridegroom's only child.
The other twelve were maidens young and free ;
Six blondes full sweet and fair, and six
With ebon locks, and eyes of amorous brown.
These all were robed in costumes white,
And each around her baréd arm a band
Of plain gold wore ; in dexter hand
A posy held, of roses red and white.
Last came the manor's gracious dame,
Who, mindful of the past, and of that aid
In moral strength and virtue's grace

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA :

The bridegroom gave, when alone she stood, and
Sore in need, now generous filled
The noble part of sponsor to the bride.
Thus arrayed, the bridal party passed
'Tween curtsies low and hats respectful doffed,
With reverent marks of sure regard
By young and old on every side displayed.

The Holy Bond.

Within the church the organ tones
Pealed forth, commingling rich with masséd voice
Of instruments of wind and string ;
And soon, 'mid festal rites such as the Church
Doth well provide, the loving twain
Were joined by holy bond to be as one
So long as life them did inspire.
And when the final hymn of praise was sung,
And through the fretted aisles rang out
The organ's glorious pæan of gladsome joy,

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

Lucius his beauteous bride enclasped,
Exclaimed, "Thou, dearest, art for ever mine!"
Then sealed the troth by one sweet kiss.

The Welcome.

As now together joined for good, for ill,
The bride and bridegroom passéd through
The mighty throng that filled both aisle and
bay—

For had the fame of Lucius spread
Afar, and hither brought the rich and great—
They gainéd wishes good and kind.
Beyond the portals did the crowd acclaim
Their joy with shout and loud huzza,
While from the tower, with clamorous sound,
The sweet bells rang a grandsire peal.
And as the happy pair emerged into
The sunny air of June's sweet day,
The fifty children robed in blameless white,
Them welcomed with a quaint conceit
In song; then, while beneath the floral roof

IDYLLS OF ARCADIA : .

They passed, three elder maidens loosed
The pendant garlands from their tender hold,
And bound these round about the twain,
Who thus confined, made slow their way with
 smiles
Of pleasure in their blissful pain.

WEDDING SONG.

Men and maidens, girls and boys,
Sing high, sing low, but join in the song,
For the world is full of joys.

Here's the bridegroom and his bride,
Sing high, sing low, but join in the song,
Wish them joy on life's full tide.

Two hearts joined, two lives made one,
Sing high, sing low, but join in the song,
All hail the glorious union.

Let them cling like sweet woodbine,
Sing high, sing low, but join in the song,
Now them both we'll fast entwine.

LUCIUS AND AMANDA.

**Bind them fast with garlands gay,
Sing high, sing low, but join in the song,
Bind them fast for life's long day.**

**Hey! Hurrah! the task is done,
Sing high, sing low, but join in the song,
Sing for joy till the setting sun,
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!**



